

Mimulus Memo



Alice Eastwood (1859-1953): Heroine of Botany

by Nancy Nies

JUNE 2014

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EVENTS

- JUNE
19 — Meeting, 7pm
- JULY
NO MEETING
- AUGUST
NO MEETING
- SEPTEMBER
18 — Meeting, 7pm

WHILE CALIFORNIANS ARE certainly familiar with the disastrous San Francisco earthquake and subsequent fire of 1906, they may not have heard of a heroic act performed at that time on behalf of native plants by a daring woman named **Alice Eastwood**. Then curator of botany at the California Academy of Sciences, she rushed to the heavily damaged Academy building as fires raged nearby. The herbarium was on the sixth floor, and since most of the stone steps had not survived the earthquake, Alice and a friend somehow managed to climb up the metal railing. They were able to quickly retrieve the most valuable botanical treasures — 1,497 type specimens — thanks to Alice's unconventional decision as curator to house them separately from the rest of the collection. After escaping with the specimens, Alice found a cart she could use to transport and protect them over the next few days, even as her own home and possessions went up in flames.

Alice Eastwood was born in Toronto, Canada, but at age 14 moved to Denver, Colorado with her family. There she attended high school, graduating as class valedictorian. She taught at the school for the next ten years,

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joint curators of the Academy's botany department, and in 1894, upon Bran-



Alice Eastwood (1859-1953)

Courtesy of the California Academy of Sciences Archives

Alice Eastwood: *Heroine of Botany* (Continued)

degee's retirement, Alice became the sole curator.

During the five years it took to rebuild the Academy's facilities in San Francisco, Alice studied at herbaria in Europe and the United States. In order to replace the Academy's lost collections, she made expeditions to Alaska, Arizona, Baja California, British Columbia, and Utah, being particularly interested in Western U.S. Liliaceae and the genera *Lupinus*, *Arctostaphylos*, and *Castilleja*. She also did extensive field work within California, and named 125 species of California plants. By the time she retired in 1949 at age 90, the Academy's herbarium contained over 350,000 specimens—almost three times the number lost in 1906—and Alice had published many books and more than 300 articles, edited the journals *Zoe* and *Erythea*, and co-founded the journal *Leaflets of Western Botany*.

Like her mentor Katharine Brandegee, Alice Eastwood was a woman ahead of her time. Broad-minded, she promoted the interests of women, plants, the outdoors, and natural resources. In 1903 only a few women were recognized in *American Men of Science*, and Alice was one of the two listed with a star to indicate their being among the top 25% of scientists in their field. She was an energetic, robust woman who could cover twenty miles a day on foot, and who was allowed to join a men's hiking group when she showed that her hiking ability rivaled that of the men. She explored difficult Western terrain in long skirts, but also designed a skirt that buttoned to make pants. Though Alice was conventional enough to apparently have twice been willing to give up her botany career for marriage, both her suitors died before that could happen.

Alice Eastwood's name lives on in the plants named for her, which include seventeen species and the genera *Eastwoodia* and *Aliciella*. In 1950, she presided over the International Botanical Congress in Sweden from a chair once used by Linnaeus. A tribute written in 1942 by F. M. MacFarland, commemorating Alice Eastwood's fifty years of service to the Academy, mentions the "frank, direct approach to every problem and [the] modest, kindly spirit" of the woman who risked her life to save valuable specimens in 1906 and would dedicate her long life to the study of native plants of California and the Western U.S. — a true heroine of botany.

Author's note: For historical and personal details, I am indebted in large part to **Larry Blakely's** well-researched website on California botanists, "*Who's in a Name?*".

Natives go "Commercial"

by Monica Tudor

AT THE BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE GARDEN FEST this year, a person came by and commented that their homeowner's association was not in favor of native/drought-tolerant plantings. I had recently read of legislation* that allowed the homeowner to use native plantings in spite of the HOA's rules. This and a suggestion from a CNPS member got me thinking about the use of native plants in Bakersfield's commercial locations.

There are other locations where native plants are featured, — CALM, for example — but what about commercial developments? I've seen deer grass in street medians, but even better are the newer developments on Stockdale highway from **California**

Pizza Kitchen all the way to **Riverlakes Park**. These are planted with several varieties of native plants. They are mixed with typical landscape plants (roses) and other drought-tolerant plants (Texas ranger, for example). Thank you to the planners and designers!



Photo: Monica Tudor

Unidentified mallow.

I noticed *Salvias*, penstemon, and manzanita. The manzanita looks great and I'm jealous because it is the plant I've had the most difficulty with, trying to get it to grow in my own California garden. In front of **Target** are some nice desert willows. At first I didn't notice the bushes in the islands, but they are toyons. The toyon is clipped to look like a boxwood, but nevertheless it's cool to see it planted.

Starting at the parking lot at Riverlakes Park,



Photo: Monica Tudor

Penstemon peeking through.

In front of **Chipotle** is a mallow of some kind and just over is (what might be) an *Encelia actonii*. Heading east along the bike path just behind California Pizza Kitchen and the **Elephant Bar** is deer grass, Cleveland sage, white sage, and redbud. These two establishments also use natives in the landscaping facing the street. Their style is to use

natives like regular commercial plants, so you'll find their plants clipped and in orderly rows. Just goes to show that natives can be used in a more formal style landscape as well as a natural-looking landscape.

I have to confess that when I discover natives in parks and commercial landscapes, it brings me joy. What's not to love? The plants are beautiful, they provide habitat and they are drought-tolerant, an important consideration for our valley.

**The Davis-Sterling Act, Civil Code §1353.8. Low Water-Using Plants. specifically states: "...a provision of any of the governing documents of a common interest development shall be void and unenforceable if it ... prohibits, or includes conditions that have the effect of prohibiting, the use of low water-using plants as a group..."*



Germinating Ideas...

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS A garden featuring at least some native plants, contact **Dorie Giragosian** (dorengiragosian@peoplepc.com). A resource listing of such gardens will be invaluable in the spring for planning possible garden tours.



Anyone with interest in and or knowledge of fabric-dyeing with plants — especially natives — contact **Sasha Honig** (andym5@bak.rr.com) for sharing knowledge and resources.

Rare Plant Treasure Hunt

ENJOY A DAY OF BOTANIZING IN THE MOUNT Pinos/ Los Padres National Forest area on **Saturday, June 28**. Help us search for several historically-documented populations in the area. Hiking will be easy, but at some altitude. Be sure to bring water for the day, a lunch, and plenty of sun protection. Ticks could be encountered but no poison oak (yay!). Meet at 9:30 am at the Chuchupate Ranger Station's large parking lot, 1 mile west of Lake of the Woods, about 8 miles from Highway 5.

For Info and to RSVP contact: **Melinda Elster** (melster@charter.net) or **Danny Slakey** (dslakey@cnps.org).

When: Saturday, June 28, 2014, 9:30am – 5pm

Where: Chuchupate Ranger Station
34580 Lockwood Valley Rd, Frazier Park

Thank you to:

Mike White, of the Tejon Conservancy, and docents **John** and **Teresa Barrios** for the field trip to the desert portion of Tejon Ranch.

Don and **Yvonne Turkal** for the enjoyable walk through CALM (the California Living Museum) and the work they have done to identify and label the plants.

Monica Tudor and **Dorie Giragosian** and others for their public outreach at the plant sale at the annual Bakersfield College Garden Fest.

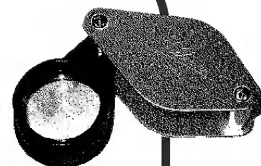
Richard Spjut for his interesting presentation at our meeting in March on rare plant associations.

Maria Ulloa-Cruz for a journey to southern Chile in her talk on the wildflowers and agriculture there at our meeting in April.

Susan Krzywicki, the Horticulture Program Director for CNPS, for her presentation at our meeting in May.

Chapter Meetings

upcoming TOPICS



Thursday, June 19, 2014 - 7 pm:

Trevor Meadows, Central Valley Biologist - River Partners,
Revegetation and Seed Propagation.

Thursday, September 18, 2014 - 7 pm:

Steve Kranyak
Growing Natives in Bakersfield.

Thursday, October 16, 2014 - 7 pm:

Randi McCormick,
Natural Land Revegetation.

All chapter meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Hall Ambulance Community Room 1031 21st Street (21st & N St.), Bakersfield, CA.

Meeting times:

6 pm — Two discussion groups:
Identifying Plants and *Growing Natives*
7 pm — Program presentation



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BOTANY HEROINE: ALICE EASTWOOD
NATIVE PLANT GARDENING
MEETING PLACE, DATES & TOPICS

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CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

The Kern Chapter of the California Native Plant Society meets the third Thursday of each month at Hall Ambulance Community Room, 1013 21st St. (21st & N St), Bakerfield, CA. Chapter Website: kern.cnps.org

The California Native Plant Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of California native plants and their natural habitats, and to increasing the understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants. CNPS has 31 chapters throughout the state and membership is open to all persons — professional and amateur with an interest in California's native plants. Members have diverse interests including natural history, botany, ecology, conservation, photography, drawing, hiking and gardening. As a Kern County resident, your membership includes Fremontia, a quarterly journal with articles on all aspects of native plants; the Bulletin, a statewide report of activities and schedules; and The Mimulus Memo, the newsletter of the Kern Chapter.

Join CNPS or renew your membership online at www.cnps.org.

Student/ Limited Income – \$25

Individual – \$45

Family or Library – \$75